



Homelessness and Affordable Housing

By Joe Steckler, President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County

I have been writing about homelessness and affordable housing for several years, but it does not seem to matter to those in Brevard County powerful enough to make something positive happen.

It reminds me of the current Naval and Congressional leadership that is eroding our country's naval power. When I came into the Navy—some years ago—we had over 2,000 ships. Our chief competitor was Russia with about the same number of ships but almost no aircraft carriers. Today we have only 270 operational ships. This is second to China who has close to 300 ships and a building capacity that outperforms ours. We have let ourselves become weaker as a seafaring nation, just as England did, and look what happened to her vast Empire.

I have talked about a one percent sales tax to fund affordable housing. Just as we have let our sea power decline, we are falling behind in the fight against homelessness. Miami-Dade County has put in place a one percent food and nutrition tax to help reduce homelessness...the first such tax in our country according to my information. How long are we to be the ostrich with its head in the sand, the rigid can being kicked down the road?

We need two plans actually: one for homelessness and one for affordable housing. Homelessness is a complex problem. Affordable housing encompasses lower budget rentals as well as government subsidized housing, which is under the purview of the Brevard County Housing and Human Services department.

The entire problem is one that has long been ignored. This failure to address a significant issue is now magnified by a growing number of seniors who need subsidized housing, which has a wait list of up to three years if it is available at all. Continued inattention to this urgent matter will only make the entire problem more difficult to resolve. Action is needed now to rein in all cans and corral the ostriches.

We are informed that a few families are leaving Brevard because they do not believe they are being treated fairly. That is their choice. But how about the thousands who will come to our community since the U.S. Space Force has designated Patrick Air Force Base as a major program for the new Space Force? These people will need affordable housing.

Homelessness and Affordable Housing cont'd on pg 49

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